IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly rewrite Claims 45-53 as follows, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121 as amended and made effective July 30, 2003:

1-44 (cancelled).

45. (currently amended) A method for producing an L-amino acid, comprising:

cultivating a bacterium in a culture medium, to produce and accumulate the L-amino acid in the medium, and recovering the L-amino acid from the medium,

said bacterium ~~being a bacterium~~ belonging to the genus *Escherichia* and having [[an]] the ability to produce an L-amino acid selected from the group consisting of L-proline, L-lysine, and L-glutamic acid, wherein an expression amount of at least one protein selected from the group consisting of :

(A) a protein having an amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 10; and

(B) a protein which is encoded by a DNA which hybridizes with a polynucleotide having the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 9 under stringent conditions of 60°C, 1x SSC, and [[1]] 0.1% SDS, and which has an activity of excreting ~~the~~ an L-amino acid selected from the group consisting of L-proline, L-lysine, and L-glutamic acid,

is increased relative to the expression of said protein in a wild-type strain MG1655 or W3110 by increasing [[a]] the copy number of a DNA coding for said protein in ~~a cell~~ said bacterium or by replacing [[a]] the native promoter with a stronger promoter for expression of a DNA coding for said protein.

46. (currently amended) The method of Claim 45, wherein [[a]] the copy number of a DNA coding for said protein in a cell is increased.

47. (previously presented) The method of Claim 46, wherein said DNA is carried on a multicopy vector in the ~~cell~~ bacterium.

48. (previously presented) The method of Claim 46, wherein said DNA is carried on a transposon in the ~~cell~~ bacterium.

49. (previously presented) The method of claim 45, wherein the expression amount of (A) is increased.

50. (previously presented) The method of claim 45, wherein the expression amount of (B) is increased.

51. (previously presented) The method of Claim 45, wherein the L-amino acid is L-lysine.

52. (previously presented) The method of Claim 45, wherein the L-amino acid is L-glutamic acid.

53. (previously presented) The method of claim 45, wherein the L-amino acid is L-proline.